

Safety On The Road

Obstacles Are Unexpected When You Back Up

A smart driver avoids situations where backing up is required.

Ever notice how power poles, garbage cans and other vehicles suddenly appear in your path when you are backing up?

Your vehicle is designed to go forward most of the time. Its backup capability is just an extra to help you get in and out of tight spots occasionally. In reverse, your range of vision and control over the vehicle are less than they would be when you are traveling forward. When the vehicle is large or loaded, backing up is even more difficult and hazardous.

A smart driver avoids situations where backing up is required. Whenever possible park so you can leave by going forward, particularly if you are operating a large vehicle with limited visibility.

For the inevitable situations in which you do have to drive in reverse, here are some safety suggestions:

- Do a circle check of your vehicle before backing up, looking for any obstructions or hazards.
- Adjust your mirrors if necessary.
- Pick out some objects you can see in your mirrors to help you determine your position.
- If possible, use a spotter to guide you. Maintain eye contact and stop immediately if you lose sight of the spotter.

- Also stop immediately if you become confused as to the position of your vehicle or landmarks.

- Stay well away from pedestrians and other vehicles and equipment.

- Watch for overhead obstructions as well as those on the ground when you back up. Overhanging roofs, wiring, signs or lights may be in your path.

- Go slowly. Excessive speed contributes to many accidents in reverse.

- Make sure your vehicle is equipped with a backup alarm in good working order. However, never depend on this device to warn others.

- Drive slowly, use a warning device such as a horn or back up alarm and concentrate on your actions and those of others around your vehicle.

- Use extreme care when backing your vehicle out of the driveway at home because children may be in the way.

It's more difficult to see your path of travel and to judge distances when you are backing up. Avoid reverse gear as much as possible, and go slowly and cautiously when you do have to travel backwards.

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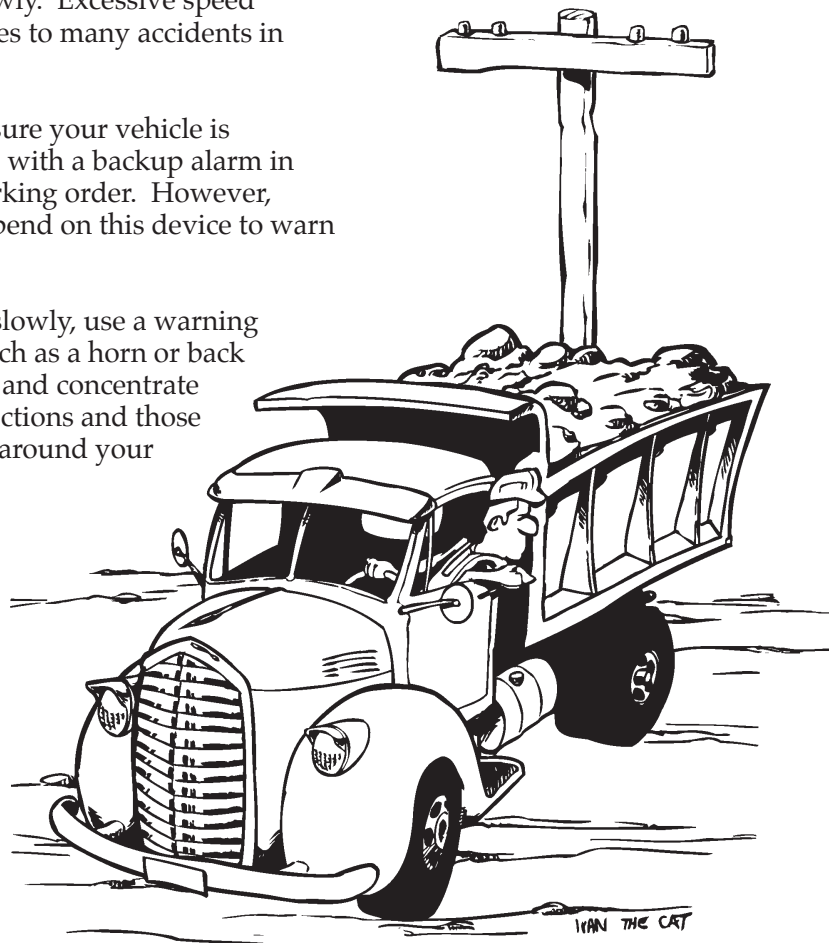
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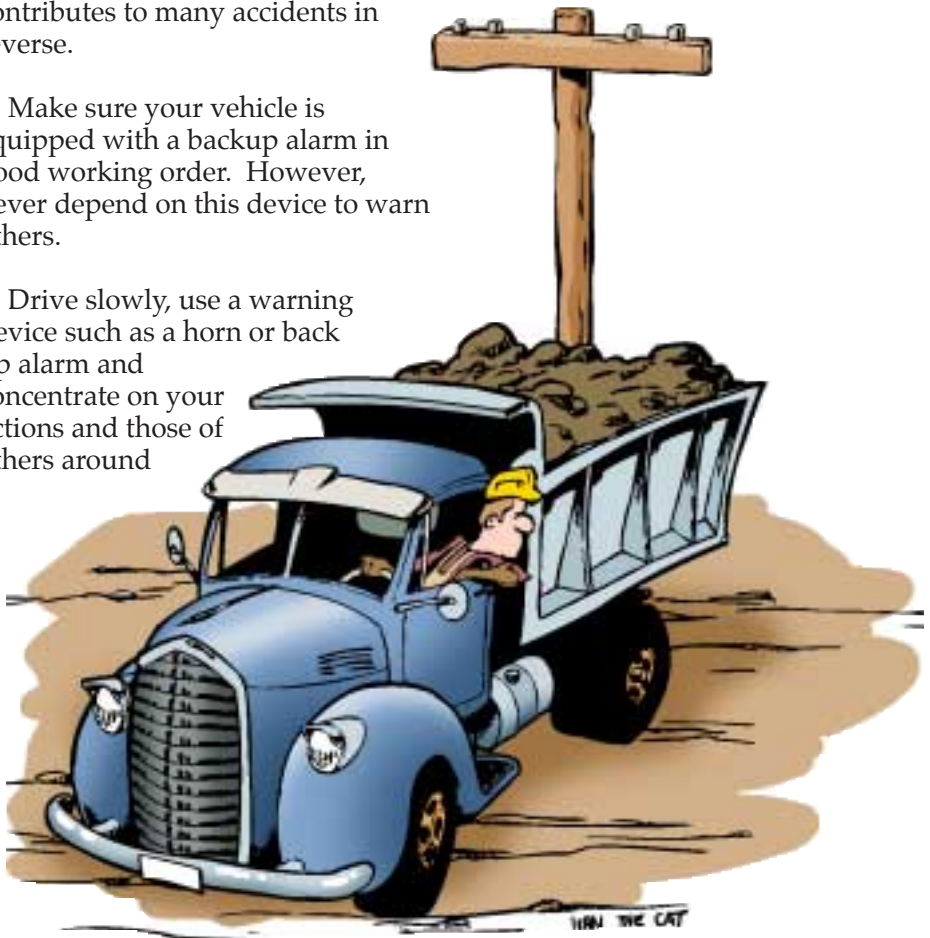
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